


A large sea turtle is swimming in clear blue water. The turtle's head and front flippers are visible above the water surface, while its shell and back flippers are submerged. The background shows a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

# NAVIGATING BIAS IN FATHERHOOD + FATHERHOOD PROGRAMMING

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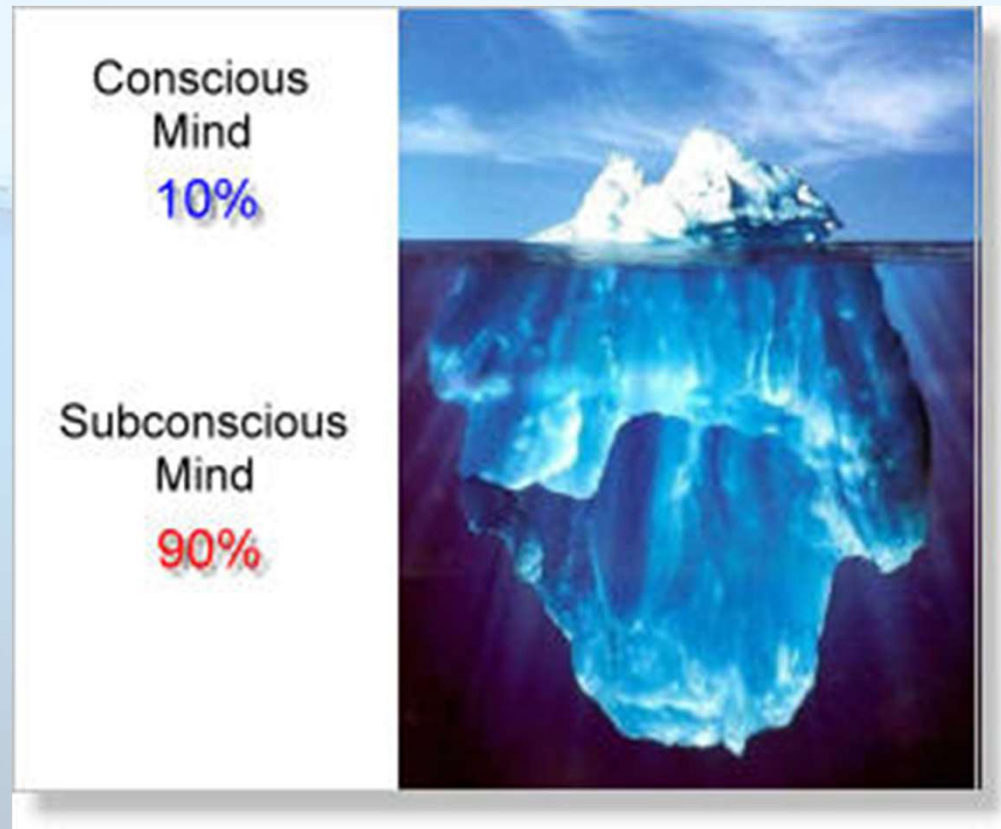
A dramatic landscape featuring dark, silhouetted mountains in the foreground and middle ground. The sky is filled with heavy, dark clouds, with a bright, golden light source (the sun) breaking through on the left side, creating a strong contrast and illuminating the clouds with a warm, orange glow. The overall mood is contemplative and powerful.

Until you make the unconscious  
conscious, it will direct your life  
and you will call it fate.

C.G. Jung

quote fancy

# What lies below the surface?



*What's below the surface only hurts us  
if we remain unaware of it*

# Take Stock: Audience Questions

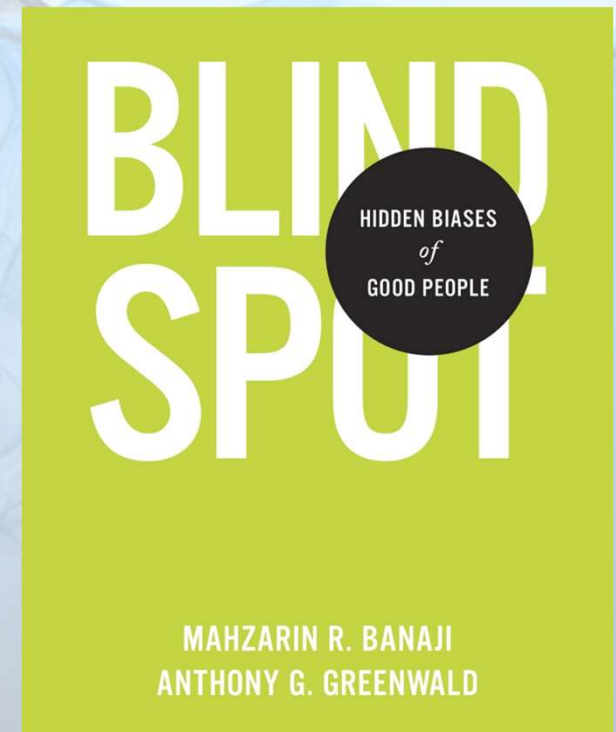
- What do you think bias means?
- Do you think bias is a positive or a negative thing?
- What do you think implicit means?





# Hidden bias BLINDSPOT

- Biases are bits of knowledge about social groups – these bits of info come from our environment.
- “Implicit” = hidden
- **TERMS:**
  - ✓ “unconscious bias”
  - ✓ “subconscious bias”
  - ✓ “implicit bias”
  - ✓ “implicit/unconscious cognition”



# What is bias?

## Explicit vs. Implicit

BIAS = NEUTRAL

Implicit vs. Explicit





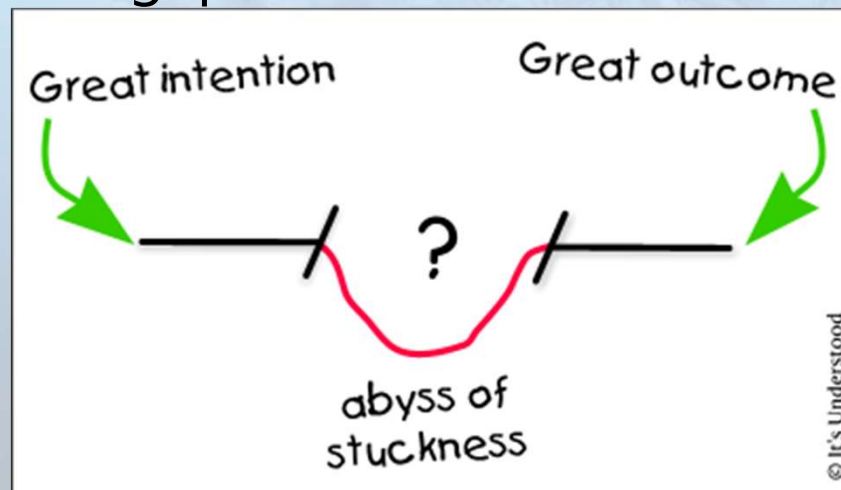
# Audience Questions:

- Why might we want to understand bias?
- For the fathers in the room:
  - Can you think of instances where you've encountered bias against you in fatherhood programs?
- For the fatherhood practitioners in the room:
  - How do you see it potentially affecting our work with fathers?

# Why Humans Should Understand Bias

It can help us think differently about the way we think and act  
thus shifting our dynamics with others

To bridge the gap between intentions and outcomes.





# **Fatherhood Professionals Should Understand Bias In Order To...**

- Better understand government systems and clients' experiences
- Give professionals and opportunity to reduce bias
- Make clients and staff's lives easier
- Help our agencies provide more equitable and fair services
- Help us improve customer service
- Increase clients' trust in our program
- Increase clients' sense of procedural justice
- Improves client compliance

# Testing Our Awareness



# Implicit Association



- Mental glue that bonds two categories into one. The mental glue can allow two categories to combine into one corresponds to an ancient concept in psychology: mental association.

# Homo Categoricus

We need mental categories

- Salt + \_\_\_\_ Pepper
- Moon + \_\_\_\_ Stars
- Moon + \_\_\_\_ Pepper

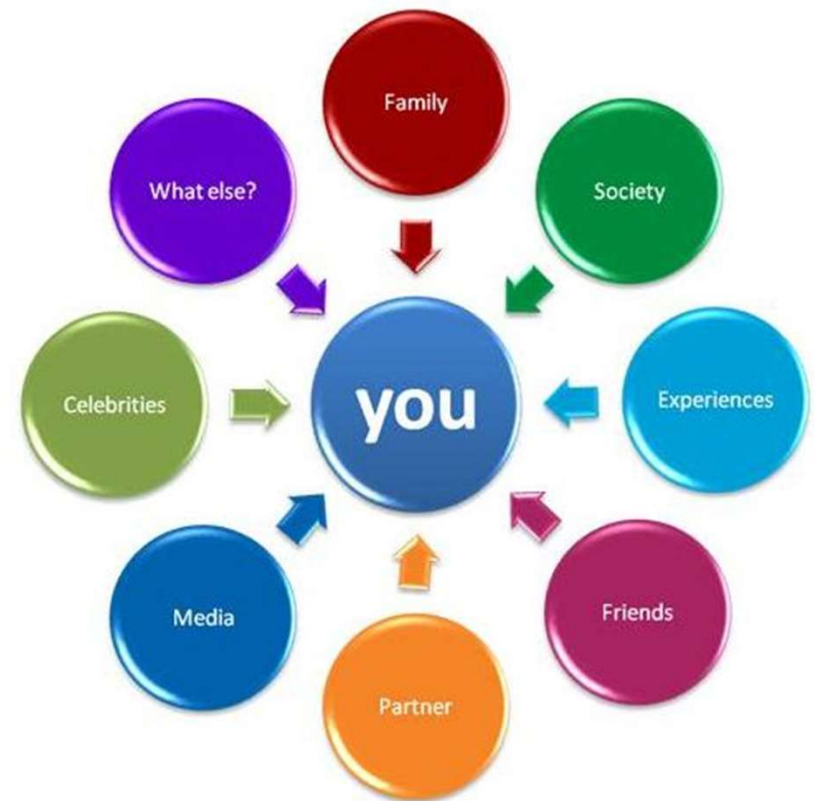
“The human mind must think with the aid of categories. Once formed, categories are the basis for normal prejudgment.” –Gordon Allport



# Where do associations come from?

- FAMILY
- FRIENDS
- MEDIA

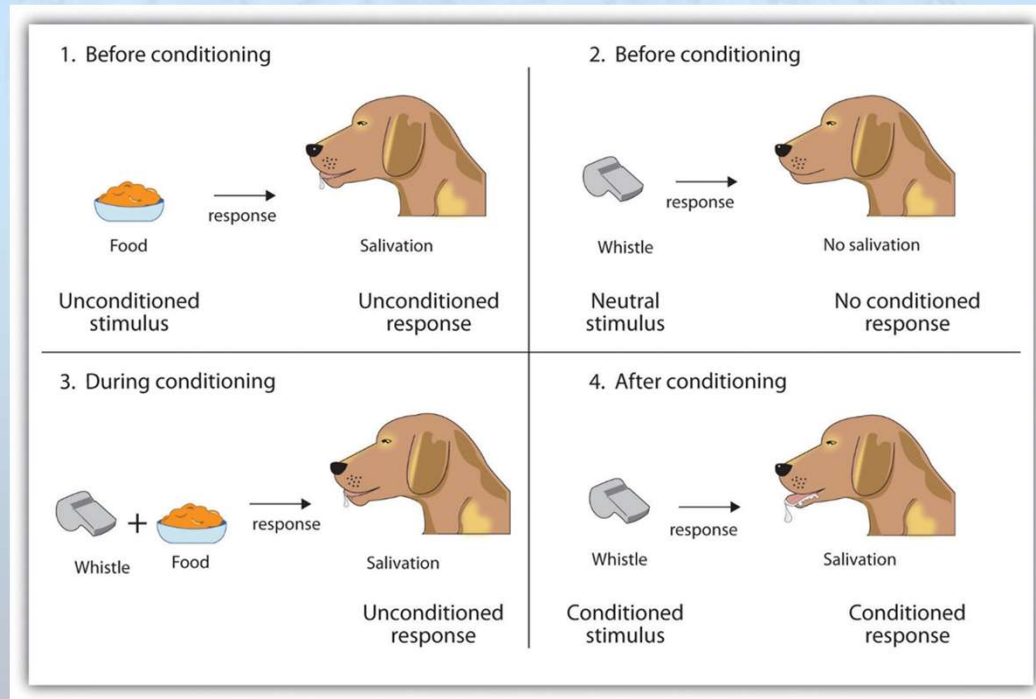
\*\*early life experiences are VERY influential





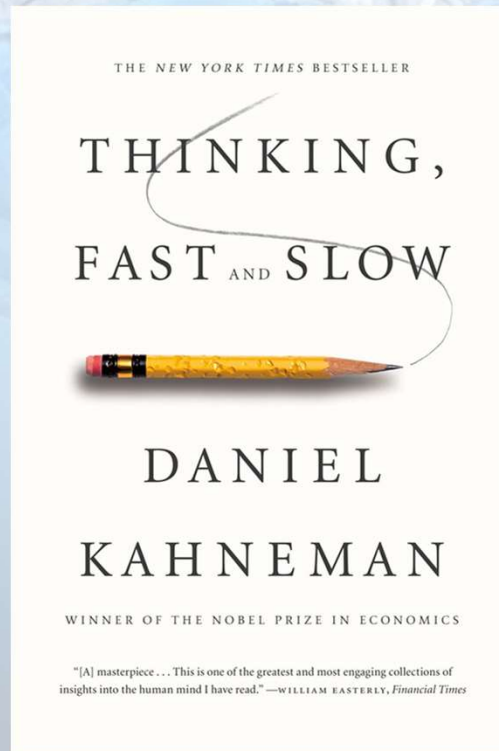
# How do associations form?

## Classical Conditioning – repeated associations



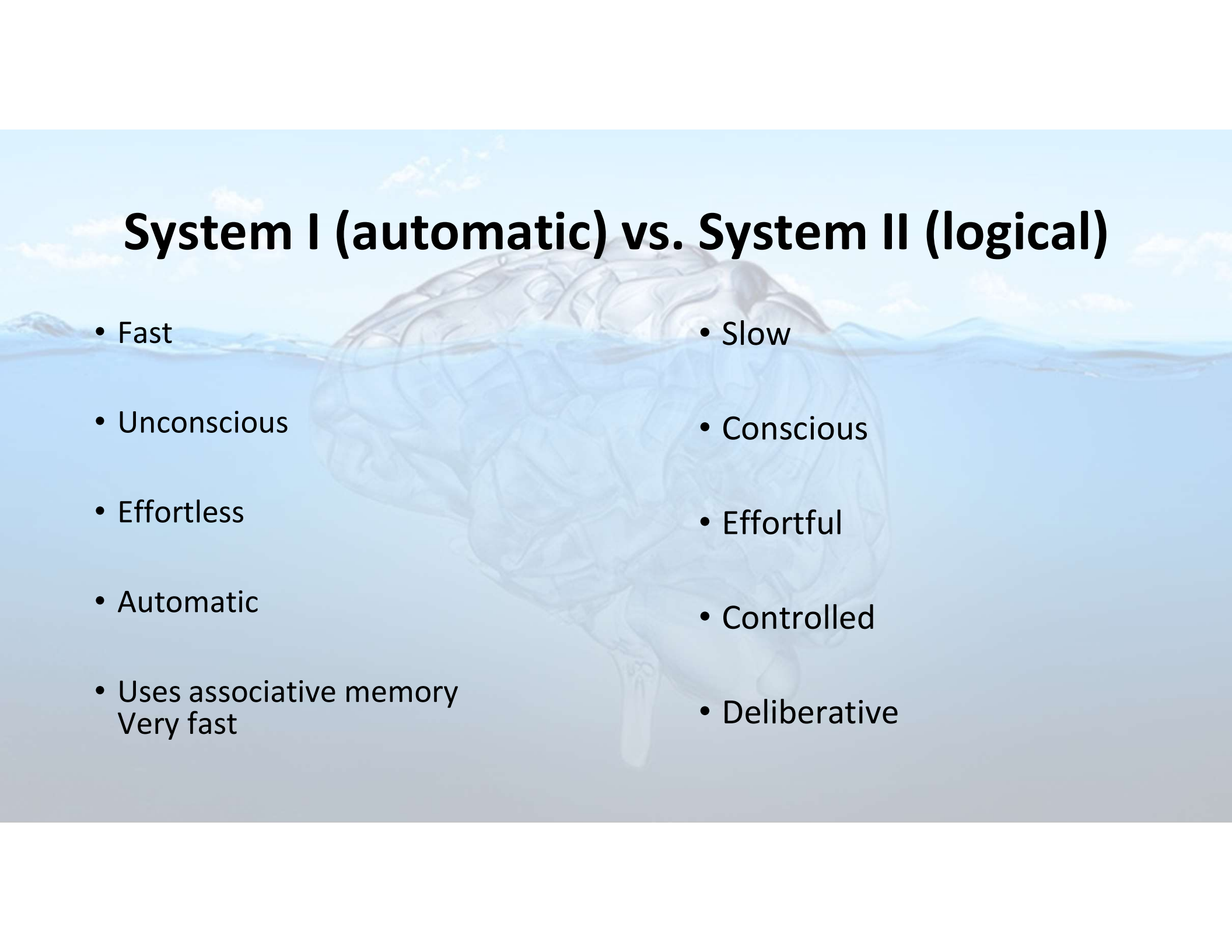
# Two Minds: Thinking Fast & Slow

Mind 1:  
Automatic



Mind 2:  
Reflective

# System I (automatic) vs. System II (logical)



- Fast
- Unconscious
- Effortless
- Automatic
- Uses associative memory  
Very fast

- Slow
- Conscious
- Effortful
- Controlled
- Deliberative

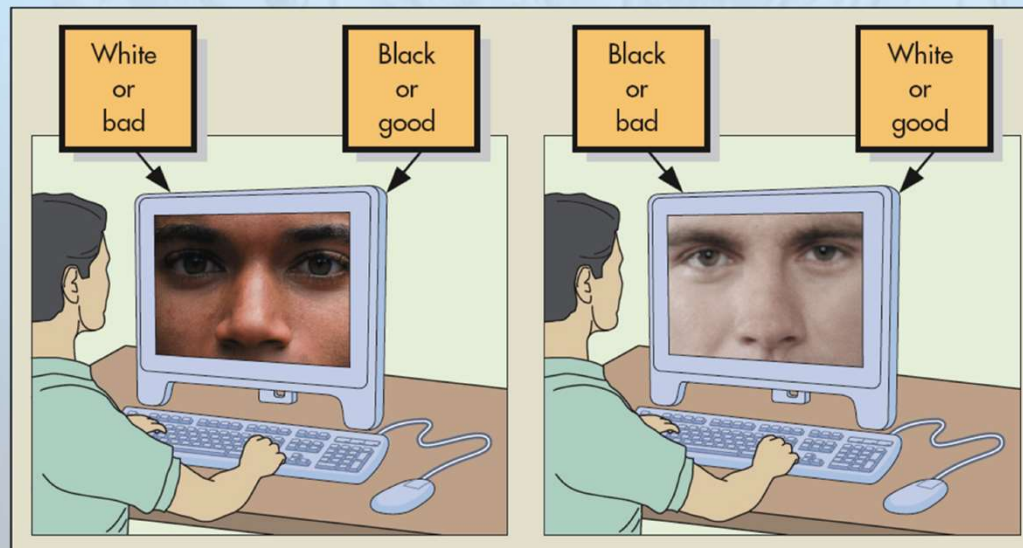
# Why is this important?

- Research suggests implicit attitudes are better predictors of behavior than explicit attitudes self-reported
- Explicit beliefs do not always align w/ implicit beliefs

# Implicit Association Test (IAT)

[www.implicit.harvard.edu](http://www.implicit.harvard.edu)

- About ½ of those who take the test obtain a result that deviates from their initial expectation.





# Does preference = prejudice?

- White preference is pervasive in American society – almost 75% of those who take the race IAT reveal automatic white preference... is 75% of society prejudiced?





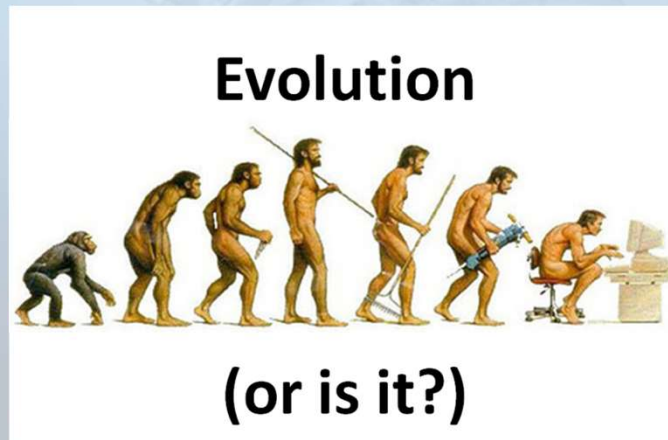
## Let's Try a Riddle

A father and his son are in a car accident. The father dies at the scene and the son, badly injured, is rushed to the hospital. In the operating room, the surgeon looks at the boy and says, "I can't operate on this boy. He is my son."

How could that be?

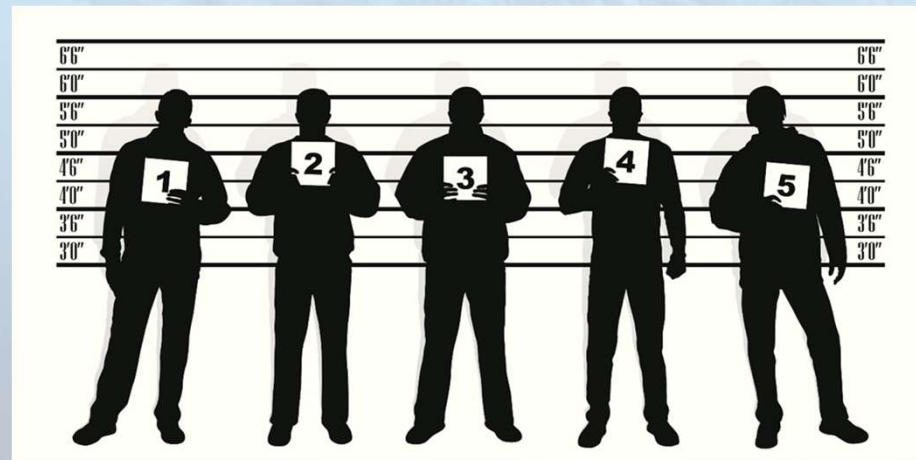
# WHY DOES OUR MIND WORK AGAINST US?

- Several of the tricks our minds play are consequences of evolutionary triumph.
- Human values and aspirations have changed radically and rapidly, even within just the last few generations.
- These evolutionary adaptations slant how we see, remember, reason, and judge

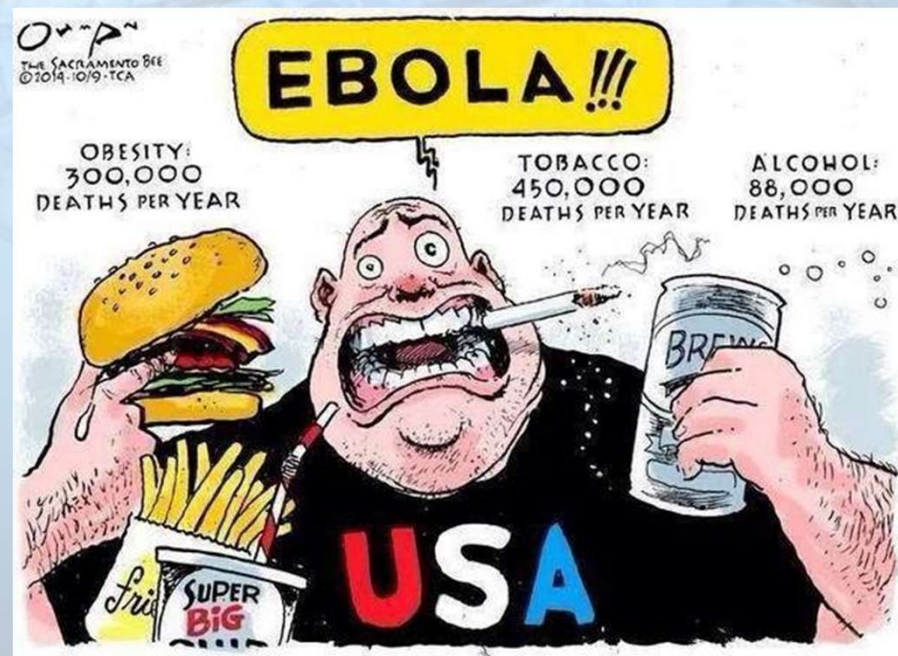


# Retroactive Interference

- Retroactive Interference = an influence of the after-the-experience information on memory AKA the Misinformation Effect



# Availability & Anchoring





# WE ARE SOCIAL ANIMALS

- As social animals, our brain evolved to recognize people who are like us and one way we do this is constantly trying to predict what might go on in the minds of others.
- The brain has evolved specific regions to help with the tasks of social thinking and feeling.

**MAN IS A SOCIAL ANIMAL**



# What is IDENTITY?



# 6-Dimensional Person Category Generator

- Race
- Religion
- Age
- Nationality/Region
- Sex/Gender
- Occupation





## **Audience Question:**

- Can you think of an example of a harmful association in the fatherhood world?

# Example of harmful association related to fatherhood





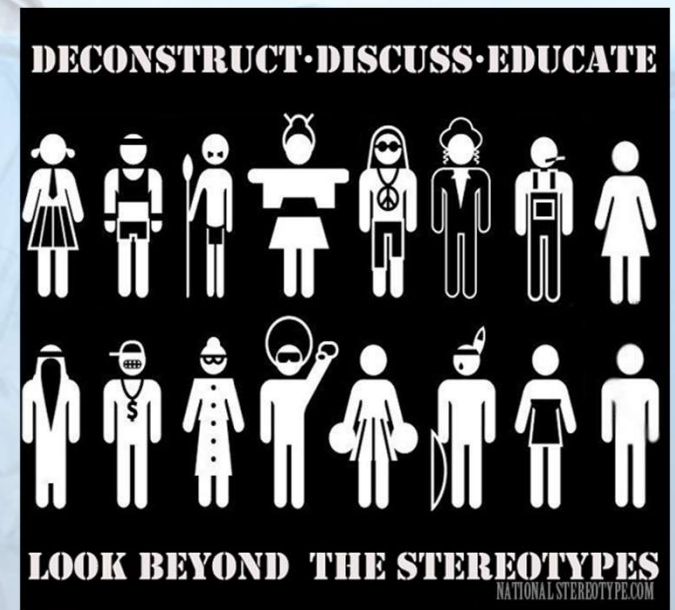
# Stereotypes & Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Self-fulfilling prophecies can be beneficial,  
but they can also be harmful



# Implications of Stereotypes

- A psychologist at Stanford University has spoken about the “burden of suspicion” that certain individuals in every society carry around because they belong to a group whose status in society is suspect. That burden can be crushing for parents.
- Confirmation Bias - Stereotypes generate their own compelling mental evidence, even if that evidence is incorrect. In turn the data generated by our minds can provide justification for a rush to report, the acceptability of lying, and the pragmatic decision to detain a suspect indefinitely.



# Real World Blind Spot: Implications



JOHN

4.1/5

\$30,328

Competence

Salary offering



JENNIFER

3.33/5

\$26,500

# Practical Steps to Address Bias

- Know your own biases! IAT, <http://implicit.harvard.edu> FREE
- Know when you're susceptible – research shows when we act on System I, you can also observe individual tendencies
  - Take appropriate time and space to limit constraints on mental processes
- Neuroplasticity
  - Build new associations – intergroup contact
  - Mindfulness / Meditation

How often do  
you think about  
the way you  
think?

*“Believing oneself to be objective is a prime threat to objectivity” – Kang 2012*



## **Audience Question:**

- For the fathers in the room:
  - Can you think of ways your caseworkers or other folks who serve you could help reduce their biases?
- For the fatherhood practitioners in the room:
  - Can you think of ways to reduce the effects of implicit bias in fatherhood service?



# Practical Steps to Address Bias in Child Support

- When serving your clients, keep track of notes on when you notice bias affecting your thoughts about and your interactions with clients – you can even use data!
- Come up with standard scripts, questionnaires, and other processes that you use on all clients the same way regardless of their identity
- For example, determine specific criteria that you will use to decide when to hit an FIDM.

The background of the slide features a conceptual illustration of a human brain floating in a body of water. The water line is positioned such that only the top portion of the brain is visible above the surface, while the majority of the brain is submerged below the water. This visual metaphor represents the idea that much of our cognitive processing, particularly related to implicit bias, occurs unconsciously and is not immediately apparent to the conscious mind. The sky above the water is light blue with some white clouds.

## **Review: Bust the Myths**

- I am aware of all of my thoughts and actions
- Implicit bias is nothing more than beliefs you choose not to tell others
- Implicit biases are a negative thing
- Implicit bias is nothing more than stereotyping
- Females can't be biased against females
- There's nothing we can do about our natural implicit biases



# Questions? Discussion....

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